Crashing prices of oilseeds, coconut and rubber

118. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of oilseeds, coconut, rubber and other items are crashing as a result of farm imports;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Indian farmers are being affected due to farm imports; and

(c) what concrete steps Government have taken to protect interests of Indian farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) The prices of oilseeds and coconut are ruling below MSP largely due to increase in availability of edible oils. As regards Natural Rubber, the decline in price is not due to import as this item is under the Restricted List in the EXIM policy and even import of Natural Rubber against Advance Licence has been banned w.e.f, 20.2.1999.

(c) To protect the farmers the Government has taken the following steps:—

(i) Large quantities of copra and other edible oil seeds have been procured under the Price- Support Scheme. Details of procurement of different oil seeds by NAFED till mid February, 2001 is at Statement—I (See *below).*

(ii) The Government has enhanced import duty by 10%—30% on different categories of crude and edible oil w.e.f. 21.11.2000.

(iii) In order to stabilize the declining prices of Natural Rubber, the Government of India have since August, 1997 made a market intervention through State Trading Corporation (STC) for procurement of Natural Rubber on Government account. STC has so far procured 52,429 MT of Natural Rubber. The procurement of Natural Rubber by STC is continuing for supply to Advance Licence Holders (ALHs) against indents placed by them with STC.

Statement-I

Procurement of Oilseeds under Price Support Scheme (PSS) by NA FED during the 2000-2001 upto mid February, 2001

Name of Oilseed	Quantity (IN MTS)
Soyabean	54,660
Sunflowerseed	37,194
Groundnut	20,781
Mustardseed	2,45,001
Safflowerseed	6,610
Copra (Milling)	2,10,586
(Ball)	1,537

Lifting of Restrictions on Import of Milk and Milk Products

119. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cheaper milk and milk products will flood the country if restriction on their imports is lifted in April, 2001;

(b) whether Government would impose quantitative curbs and tariff to safeguard the interests of Indian producers even if multinationals import subsidised milk and milk products; and

(c) how Government propose to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) India has been removing restrictions on import in a phased manner since 1991. In this process, import restrictions on some items of milk and milk products have already been removed and on the remaining items quantitative restrictions will be removed on 31.3.2001.

(b) and (c) Import of Skimmed Milk Powder (SMP) is freely allowed without any restriction, since 1995. In 1999-2000 due to fall